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### **Reconstructing a Dress**

*Epistle to Mary Todd Lincoln*

Lace is a noose,  
a lifetime of woven  
threads with

stitching plucked  
to make a delicate pattern  
out of loss.

Did you wear black lace  
that veiled your hair  
the night you felt  
the trembling breath  
of a nation  
go out,

the pearls  
loosen and drip  
from their string?

Did you clip tufts of  
his hair, wrap them  
in yellow-point  
lace and singe them  
over flame,

watch each curl  
and dance, alight,  
like a fall leaf snared  
in the catch of coming  
winter?

Please, tell me  
I am not the only  
mother, only wife  
setting the night table  
for my dead.



## Eyespots

*Epistle to Margaretha Geertruida Zelle (Mata Hari)*

You should know that not every man pointing his rifle  
that day was a dutiful stone; a few had pale, pumice-hearts  
and blamed the rising sun for the bullets that shredded  
your silk and crepe wings.



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**Art Information**

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## Megan Merchant: Two Epistles

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Megan Merchant is the author of four poetry chapbooks: *Translucent, sealed* (Dancing Girl Press, 2015), *In the Rooms of a Tiny House* (ELJ Publications, 2016), *Unspeakable Light* (Throwback Books, 2016), and *A Thousand Paper Cranes* (Finishing Line Press, forthcoming). Her debut full-length poetry collection, *Gravel Ghosts*, was recently released from Glass Lyre Press. Her second full-length collection, *The Dark's Humming*, won the 2015 Lyrebird Prize through Glass Lyre Press and will be published in 2017. She also has a forthcoming children's book through Philomel Books.

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